

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested in light of the following discussion.

In response to the objection to the drawings, paragraphs [0036] and [0044] have been respectively amended to provide references to components 61 and 87.

In response to the claim objections, applicant has amended each objected claim to correct grammatical errors, correct claim dependency and to more particularly point out the claimed subject matter.

In response to the rejection of claims 1 – 21 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Mastandrea, Jr. et al., each independent claim 1, 10, 16 and 21 has been amended to patentably define over Mastandrea, Jr. et al.

In particular, claim 1 has been amended to specify that a first mounting member (16) is mountable relative to a main MRI imaging magnet (14) in a fixed axial position. Comparing this to the lower trolley cage assembly 62 in Mastandrea, Jr. et al., shows that the trolley cage assembly 62 must move axially with respect to the main magnetic imaging magnet 10.

Claim 1 has been further amended to specify that a locator member (32) is spaced apart a predetermined axial distance from the first mounting member (16) and that the locator member engages and axially locates a gradient coil (36) in the main MRI magnet bore (12). Comparing this to the pneumatic latching mechanisms 92 in Mastandrea, Jr. et al., shows that the latching mechanisms 92 are not axially spaced apart from the lower trolley cage assembly 62 and do not engage a gradient coil. Latching mechanisms 92 are

axially coextensive with the lower trolley cage assembly 62 and do not engage the gradient coil 56. Rather, they engage the flanges 43A and 43B on patient beam 38.

Claim 1 has been further amended to specify that a spacer member (40) is spaced a fixed axial distance apart from the first mounting member (16). As seen in Mastandrea, Jr. et al., the centering hoops 86 are axially coextensive with the lower trolley cage assembly 62 and not axially spaced apart from it.

The second mounting member (46) in claim 1 has been defined as being axially fixed by a keyed surface portion (42) on the spacer member (40). The patient couch 44 is not axially fixed within the track 42, but rather slides along it.

The second mounting member (46) has been further defined as being configured to axially locate a probing second coil (52) in the main MRI magnet bore at a predetermined axial distance relative to the main MRI magnet (14) and the gradient coil (36). There does not appear to be any corresponding structure in Mastandrea, Jr. et al.

In light of the distinctions noted above, it is submitted that claim 1, as well as claims 2 – 9 which further distinguish claim 1, define over Mastandrea, Jr. et al.

In response to the rejection of claim 10, applicant has amended claim 10 to specify that the locator member (32) is rigidly spaced a predetermined axial distance apart from the front mounting member (16). In contrast, the trolley cage 58 in Mastandrea, Jr. et al. is not axially spaced apart a predetermined axial distance from the coupler 52. The trolley cage 58 is coupled to the gradient coil assembly 54, which includes the trolley cage 58. Coupler 52 couples with the gradient coil assembly 54, rather than being axially spaced from it.

Claim 10 has been further amended to specify that a pair of rods (60) pass axially through a gradient coil (36). The rods 80 and 91 in Mastandrea Jr. et al. do not pass through the gradient coil 54.

In light of the structural distinctions noted above, it is submitted that claim 10, as well as claim 11 – 15 which further define claim 10, patentably define over Mastandrea Jr., et al.

Considering next the rejection of claim 16, claim 16 has been amended to specify that the positioning system (10) includes a pair of support members (60) which pass through the bore of a gradient coil (36). As noted above, Mastandrea Jr. et al. fails to disclose any similar structure. Accordingly, it is submitted that claim 16, as well as dependent claims 17 – 20 which further define claim 16, patentably define over Mastandrea, Jr. et al.

Claim 21 has been amended to include the step of abutting a surface (23) on the positioning assembly (10) against the MRI imaging apparatus (2), and thereby axially spacing a specimen a predetermined axial distance within the bore (12) of an MRI imaging apparatus. There is no analogous teaching in Mastandrea Jr., et al.

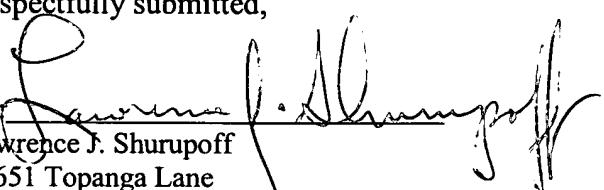
Claim 21 has been further amended to specify that a specimen holding assembly (72) is inserted into the positioning assembly (10) as seen in Fig. 10. Surface 82 (Fig. 7) abuts the position assembly (10) and locates a specimen in a predetermined axial position. Mastandrea, Jr. et al. requires a sliding patient couch 44 to slide a patient into the bore of an MRI apparatus A. There is no mention of any abutment determining the axial position of a specimen within the apparatus A.

In light of the above, it is submitted that claim 21, as amended, patentably defines over Mastandrea, Jr., et al.

In response to the second interpretation of Mastandrea, Jr., et al. it is submitted that claim 1 has been amended to define over this interpretation. In particular, the patient couch 44 is not spaced a predetermined axial distance apart from the patient beam 38. Rather, the patient couch slides axially over the patient beam 38. Additionally, the centering hoops 86 do not axially locate a probing second coil in the main MRI magnet bore as required in claim 1.

As claims 2 – 4 depend from and further define claim 1, it is submitted that claims 2 – 4 also patentably define over Mastandrea, Jr., et al.

Respectfully submitted,

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